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CHARLESTON, W.Va. — As the anniversary of the devastating 2016 flood approaches, Governor Jim Justice and Commerce Secretary Woody Thrasher today announced two information fairs in May to talk about resources to put West Virginia communities on the path to flood recovery.

The RISE on the Road resource forums take place at 3 p.m., May 1, at Clendenin Middle School/Health Clinic, 107 Koontz Avenue, Clendenin, Kanawha County; and May 4 at White Sulphur Springs Civic Center, 24 Tressel Street, White Sulphur Springs, Greenbrier County. RISE West Virginia is the state's long-term recovery initiative aimed at revitalizing local economies affected by the June 2016 flooding.

The sessions are free and the public is encouraged to attend. Participants are encouraged to register to enable organizers to prepare materials. Visit wvcommerce.org/RISE-Kanawha or wvcommerce.org/RISE-Greenbrier.

“Our message is simple but powerful: resources are available to help West Virginia’s remaining flood victims,” said Gov. Jim Justice. “I am pleased to announce that as we approach our one year anniversary of the worst disaster I have ever witnessed, I, along with our congressional delegation, have secured \$104 million in additional funds to assist with our unmet needs. These funds will help move our great state forward in its long-term recovery and resiliency strategy. We need more, but it is a start.”

West Virginia has received a Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant from The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the amount of \$104 million. This funding gives the state

significant flexibility in determining how best to use these funds to meet the state's greatest unmet needs. These funds are intended primarily to restore housing, but infrastructure and economic revitalization activities also are eligible for funding.

Secretary Woody Thrasher is working with the state's congressional delegation to secure additional funds. "We believe we have the data that shows Congress that West Virginia needs more. Despite the money that the state has received, there remain tremendous unmet needs. We are ready to make an additional request that could total more than \$400 million and we are working every single day to tell West Virginia's story."

The state is submitting an action plan to HUD this week which will detail the story of both the plans for the initial \$104 million CDBG-DR award and the extraordinary remaining unmet need. The first \$104 million will be prioritized to assist impacted homeowners whose critical needs have yet to be met following the June 2016 floods. The full plan can be viewed at wvcommerce.org/WVDisasterRecovery.

"HUD tells us where we have to spend the dollars based on the data. We have asked for as much flexibility as possible in the use of these funds and we have been working closely with HUD and our experts to ensure these dollars are spent correctly and effectively. We need all individuals whose homes suffered damage to accept the help that is coming to us. If we spend this money the right way, it will strengthen our chances of receiving more recovery money in the future," said Secretary Thrasher.

About RISE on the Road forums

The West Virginia Department of Commerce is hosting the RISE on the Road forums to explain the process and provide information on how the federal and state funds received to date will be used to rebuild West Virginia. The forums will also present information on the long-term recovery process, which includes rebuilding damaged housing, restoration of critical infrastructure, and projects

to stimulate business activity and job creation and retention. The RISE on the Road forums also gives state leaders a chance to hear directly from impacted communities.

“Participation in these forums is critical to begin the long-term process of rebuilding damaged housing and providing our citizens with relief,” said Adjutant General James Hoyer. “I look forward to being able to speak to our survivors at these sessions and I encourage everyone to attend.”

“We want to provide a place where folks can get information for their specific unmet needs. If a household lost their bridge, we will have resources available to find out how we can replace it,” said Jenny Gannaway, director of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. “Please attend and find out more about the help that is on its way.”

Support booths from partnering agencies and organizations will open at 3 p.m. and be staffed until 7 p.m. to answer questions, help citizens identify potential resources to meet remaining unmet needs and direct forum attendees to available funding sources. Secretary Thrasher will give a general welcome at 5:30 p.m.

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